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STEPHEN KING THE STAND



MARVEL
LIMITED SERIES
2 of 5
PARENTAL ADVISORY

Captain Trips

AGUIRRE-SACASA

PERKINS

MARTIN

STEPHEN KING THE STAND

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PREVIOUSLY IN THE STAND...

The circle has opened:

On-the-rise recording star Larry Underwood has left Los Angeles and gone home to his mother's apartment in New York to get his head straight...

Young, pretty Frannie Goldsmith has told her boyfriend that she's pregnant—and has broken up with him...

And something terrible has occurred at the mysterious Project Blue government facility in the California desert...

Something that sent Charlie Campion and his family fleeing across the country in their Chevy, racing to beat the devil before literally crashing into Bill Hapscomb's Texaco Station in Arnette, Texas...

There, what Hapscomb and his friends—including the quiet, steady Stuart Redman—found when they come out to investigate the wreck was a car of death. Campion's wife and daughter were dead, and Campion not far from it...

...from a mysterious, highly contagious, flu-like disease that slowly but surely has started to infect all of the people who have come in contact with Campion...



THE CALIFORNIA DESERT: HEADQUARTERS OF PROJECT BLUE

GENERAL BILL STARKEY:

Who began his career in the military thirty-six years ago as a West Point plebe.

Who has won countless medals in service of his country.

Who has spoken to many presidents, and even offered some of them advice.

Who has been through dark times before, but this...

The accident had occurred almost perfectly in between shifts.

Starkey thought, you will spend eternity with your face in a bowl of tomato soup.

LENICREIGHTON, STARKEY'S RIGHT-HAND:

Those men who handled Campion's body in Arnette have been through their prelims in Atlanta and...they all tested positive, except for one.

Stuart Redman, who's negative so far, but who knows how long that's gonna last.



If only
Campion hadn't
run...

That was
sloppy security,
Len. Very
sloppy.

Go on.

Arnette's been
quarantined and we've
isolated at least sixteen
cases of constantly
shifting A-Prime flu
there...

On the plus
side, as far as the
media's concerned, they
believe this is an
anthrax situation.

Thank God
for that, at
least.

What else,
Len?

We...have a Texas highway
patrolman, Joseph Robert
Brentwood, whose cousin
owns the gas station
where Campion ended up.
He dropped by there
yesterday morning to tell
Kapscomb the health
department people
were coming.

And was exposed
to A-Prime, Starkey
thought.

We picked
him up three hours
ago, Billy, but in
the meantime, he...

...he'd been
patrolling half
of East
Texas.

And God
knows how many
people he's been
in contact with.

Christ.

99.4% communicability,
Starkey thought.

99.4% excess
mortality.

INTERLUDE

On June 18, five hours after he had talked to his cousin Bill Hapscomb, Joe Bob Brentwood pulled Harry Trent, an insurance man, over for speeding on Highway 410.

While Brentwood wrote out the ticket, Trent jokingly tried to sell him a life insurance policy.

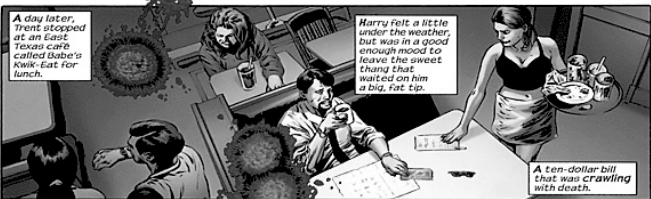
Puing was the last thing on Joe Bob's mind.



A day later, Trent stopped at an East Texas café called Babe's Kwik-Eat for lunch.

Harry felt a little under the weather, but was in a good enough mood to leave the sweet thing that waited on him a big, fat tip.

A ten-dollar bill that was crawling with death.



In the Kwik-Eat's parking lot, Trent stopped to help New Yorker Edward M. Norris, who was on vacation with his family.

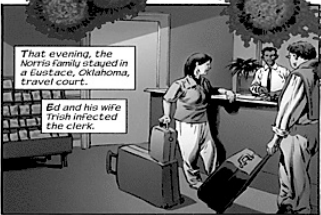
Trent gave Norris very clear directions to US 21 heading north.

He also, unwittingly, served the man and his family their death warrants.



That evening, the Norris family stayed in a Eustace, Oklahoma, travel court.

Ed and his wife Irish infected the clerk.



Their kids, Marsha, Stanley and Hector, infected the kids they played with on the travel court's playground.

Kids bound for west Texas, Alabama, Arkansas, and Tennessee.



Everybody was getting into the act.

The next morning, at a doctor's office in Polliston, Oklahoma--poor Hector Norris was glass-eyed with a terrible fever--the Norrises infected no less than twenty-five people.

Including a matronly woman, Sarah Bradford, who would go on to pass the disease to her entire bridge club that night.

After bridge, Sarah and her best friend Angela Duprey went out for a quiet drink in a cocktail bar.

They rehearsed their playing and, simultaneously, managed to infect everyone in the Polliston bar with the disease that would soon be known across the disintegrating country as "Captain Trips."

The next day, Angela's teenaged daughter Samantha would go on to infect everybody in the swimming pool at the Polliston YMCA.

And so on.

Chain letters don't work. Everyone knows that. But this one, the Captain Trips chain letter, was working very well indeed.

The pyramid, with Charlie Campion as its tip, was being built.

All the chickens were coming home to roost.

ATLANTA, THE CENTER FOR DISEASE CONTROL



NURSE PATTY GREER AND STUART REDMAN:



DR. DENNINGER:

Patty Greer is *quite* upset that you gave her trouble.

That's not very nice, Mr. Redman, is it?

I want some answers. I want to know where my friends are. I want to know why, if my town's been quarantined, I haven't seen anything about it on that TV in the corner.

I simply don't have the authority to tell you anything.

I know very little myself.

You've been taking my blood. If you want more, you either start giving me answers or you send big men to get it. And no matter *how* big they are, I'm gonna try to rip holes in those germ-suits.

Mr. Redman, your lack of cooperation may do your country a great disservice. Do you understand that?

From where I'm sitting, it's my country doing me the disservice. Now get the hell out of here and send someone who *can* talk to me!

Redman's fear was big inside him, like a runaway elephant.

It would be forty more hours before they sent him a man who would answer some of his questions.

What's on
your mind,
Frannie?

PETER AND FRANNIE GOLDSMITH:

I...
I'm
pregnant,
Paddy.

Oh,
Frannie.
For
sure?

For
sure.

Well, then,
you'd better
come over
here and sit
with me.

Peter Goldsmith held his daughter for a long time. When Frannie's tears began to taper off, she asked him:

Daddy, do you still like me?



What?
Yes, I still like you fine, Frannie.



Which made her cry again, but this time, they weren't great, braying gobs.

When she'd finished the second time...



Was it that Jesse?

Yes. He said he would marry me, but...

Oh, he means well, but...



"Two semesters ago we went to a poetry reading, Paddy, given by a man named Ted Enlin...and the place was packed and everyone was listening very solemnly...

"And it struck me as so pretentious, and I...

"Well, you know me..."

"Frannie got the giggles."

"I did. And, Paddy, I couldn't stop. And Jesse was furious with me."





U.S. ROUTE 27.

They set upon
Nick Andros just
around dusk.

A quartet of good ol'
boys: Vincent Hogan,
Mike Childress, Billy
Warner, and the worst
of 'em, Ray Booth.

Nick put up the
best fight he
could, decking
one of them--

And bloodying
another's nose--

So that for one
or two hopeful
moments, he
thought he might
actually win--

Then one of them,
the leader it seemed
like, caught Nick just
over the chin--

Shredding Nick's
lower lip with
some sort of
school ring--

And that
was pretty
much that--



Why don't he
say anything?
Why don't he yell
out, Ray?



I told you not to use any
names! And I don't give a
damn why he don't yell out!
I'm gonna mess him up!



Nick caught some
of Ray's words--



Somehow, his wild
kick connected with
Ray's belly--



It was probably
the worst thing
Nick could've done.

Ho!...
Hold 'im...

Hold
'im by the
hair...



You...
you kicked
me...

Yer...
a dirty...
fighter...

Kicks and punches rained down on him, then, and Nick became a boneless, jittering puppet on a string, flopping around.

After awhile, in the last fading
light of day, Ray and his pals
became only shapes.

Easy, Ray,
you wanna
kill him?

Dimly, Nick thought he saw
lights splashing down the
road, approaching fast. He
felt himself being released...

By that point,
mercifully, Nick's
consciousness
was narrowing
down to a pencil
beam...

...before, even
more mercifully,
snuffing out
completely.

NEW YORK CITY.
THE APARTMENT OF...



Morning, sexy. I made us eggs and bacon.

...was her name Maria?

Larry couldn't remember. He was hung-over and in pain.



Oh, no, honey, I've got to run. There's, uh, someone I've got to see.

No...

...my mother. I'm staying with her and I didn't call last night.

That much was true, at least.

... I thought you were a nice guy.



Look, I'm sorry. I have to go.



You ain't no nice guy--!





Any other man, the spatula would've missed. But this was Larry, remember.



You ain't no nice guy and I bet you ain't the Larry Underwood that has that record, either!



CRASHH

Jee-zus--!



I hope you rot! I hope you fall in front of a subway train! You ain't no singer! You ain't got no mother! And you ain't no nice guy!



Later, seeking refuge, Larry went to the Lux movie theatre on 42nd Street. A horror movie was playing, about a bogeyman who killed horny teenagers in their dreams.

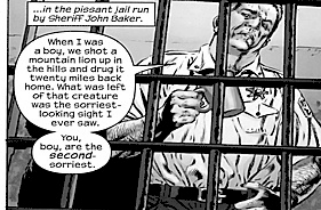
I am...
...I am
a nice
guy.

In one of the rows behind Larry, a man was coughing...



When Nick came to, he was lying on a bunk, behind bars...

...in the pissant jail run by Sheriff John Baker.



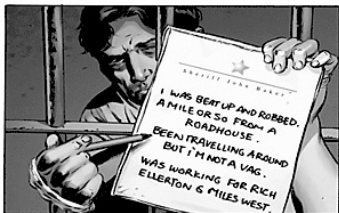
When I was a boy, we shot a mountain lion up in the hills and drug it twenty miles back home. What was left of that creature was the scariest-looking sight I ever saw.

You, boy, are the second-sorriest.

It didn't take Baker long to figure out that Nick was deaf and couldn't talk. He could read lips, though, so they came up with a system to communicate.

Baker talked, Nick wrote.

All right, Nick Andros, what happened to you? Doc Soames and his wife almost ran you down like a woodchuck, boy.



Sheriff John Baker
I WAS BEAT UP AND ROBBED.
A MILE OR SO FROM A
ROADHOUSE.
BEEN TRAVELLING AROUND
BUT I'M NOT A VAG.
WAS WORKING FOR RICH
ELLERTON 6 MILES WEST.



You see Rich's dog?



Sheriff John Baker
BIG DOBERMAN
BUT NICE
NOT MEAN



Why don't I let you out of there and you can come into my office?

The coffee hurt Nick's mouth but tasted good.

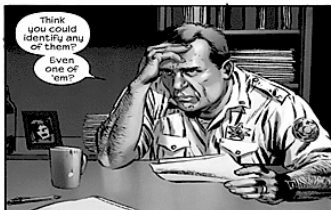
I tell you what. If you stick around, maybe we can get the guys who did this to you.

How many were there?



Think you could identify any of them?

Even one of 'em?



That's Ray Booth.

My brother-in-law.

It made perfect sense to Baker. He knew Ray and his goons. As vicious and cowardly as a dogpack.



Sheriff Baker was going to have to tell his wife Janey about Booth. She knew her brother was a bad egg, but it still probably meant no Janey-loving for Baker this week...

...yes, sir, between this deaf-dumb drifter and the swollen glands that were throbbing under Baker's jaw, it was shaping up to be a wonderful day.



ATLANTA, THE CDC.
FORTY HOURS LATER.



Classified.

My guess
is that means
Army.

Mr.
Redman...

You've disappeared from
the face of the Earth. If you
start **knowing** too much?
The big guys might decide
that the safest thing
would be for you to
disappear **forever**.

Can
you...

...can you
tell me how
the others
are doing,
at least?

Deceased, all
of the men who were
with you at the gas
station.

And their
families, as
well.

All...all
of them?

Everyone
but--

What
did you
do?

Mr.
Redman--!

**WHAT DID
YOU PEOPLE
DO?**

Nothing. On this one,
responsibility spreads in
so many directions, it's
invisible. It was an accident.
We're trying to cope with it, but
we're not responsible. Not even
Campion's responsible; given
the circumstances, I
would've run, too.



A black and white illustration of a man, Stuart, lying in bed, looking distressed with his hand on his forehead. The room is dark, and the lighting is dramatic, highlighting his face and the texture of the bed.

That night, Stu slept better than he had since they brought him to Atlanta.

And had an extremely vivid dream.

(He had always dreamed a great deal--his late wife had complained about him thrashing and muttering in his sleep--but he'd never had a dream like this one.)

A black and white illustration of a man standing on a dirt path that stretches into the distance. The path is flanked by dense, tall grass or reeds. In the far distance, a small figure of a person can be seen on the path. The sky is bright, suggesting a sunny day.

He was standing on a country road, under a blazing summer sun, surrounded by fields of green corn.

There was the sound of crows, far away.

Closer by, someone was playing a hymn on a guitar.

A black and white close-up illustration of Stuart's face. He has a thoughtful and slightly worried expression, looking upwards and to the side. The lighting is soft, highlighting his features.

This is where I ought to get to, Stu thought, in the dream. Yeah, this is the place, all right.

(He half-remembered the hymn from his childhood, but couldn't place the tune...)

A black and white illustration of a landscape where a bright sun is being completely obscured by dark, swirling clouds. The foreground shows a field of crops, possibly corn, with some stalks in the immediate foreground.

Then the music stopped.

And clouds came out of nowhere to blot out the sun.

A black and white illustration of Stuart crouching in a field of tall corn. He is looking back over his shoulder with a fearful expression. The corn stalks are very tall and dense, creating a claustrophobic atmosphere.

And Stuart became afraid.

He felt as if there were something worse than the plague.

Something in the corn and it was watching him.



Him, Stu thought.
It's him, the man
with no face.

Oh dear
God.

Oh dear
God, no!





Then Stu woke up and the dream was gone, leaving behind feelings of disquiet, dislocation, and relief.



He went to the sink and splashed water on his face.



He went to the room's window and looked at the moon.



All that corn.

Must've been Iowa or Nebraska, maybe northern Kansas.



The strange thing was...

...Stuart had never been to any of those places.

TO BE CONTINUED...

SDCC '08: Aguirre-Sacasa on The Stand

Writer Roberto Aguirre-Sacasa begins the end of the world with
THE STAND: CAPTAIN TRIPS, part one of the epic Stephen King adaptation

By Sean T. Collins

Here amid the crowds, sights, sounds, and occasionally smells of Comic-Con International in San Diego, it's tempting to wish that 99% of your fellow con-goers disappeared, if only to make it easier to get a decent seat during the Cup o' Joe panel. But as Stephen King showed us in his seminal post-apocalyptic horrorsaga "The Stand," wiping out humanity can be a lot more complex—and horrifying—than [just wishing].

When a government-made plague mows down nearly everyone on earth, the few survivors must band together to survive, and it's up to writer Roberto Aguirre-Sacasa to bring this conflict of Biblical proportions to life in the pages of Marvel's upcoming adaptation, beginning in September with the first of several limited series, THE STAND: CAPTAIN TRIPS. We asked the writer about his King-fan background, his favorite moments in the book, and why THE STAND will make lovers of great storytelling stand up and take notice.

"I was the guy who bought the hardcover on the day it was released and devoured the book in two or three days, reading non-stop."

Marvel.com: For those who aren't familiar with it, what's the scoop on the story of "The Stand"?

Roberto Aguirre-Sacasa: To me, it's King's big, messy, American epic about, well, everything—which begins, of course, with 99.4% of the world's population dying from a "super-flu." That's the first third of the novel. From there, you see the survivors—among the best characters King has created—being drawn towards two mythic figures: the kind-hearted Mother Abigail and Randall Flagg, aka the Dark Man, the Walking Dude. This leads, of course, to humanity's last stand—Good versus Evil—with salvation or damnation hanging in the balance.

Marvel.com: Were you a big King fan in

general or "Stand" fan in particular before this assignment? What is it about his work, and this book in particular, that appeals to you?

Roberto Aguirre-Sacasa: When I was younger, in my teens, I had more time to read and I was a Stephen King fanatic. Hardcore. I was the guy who bought the hardcover on the day it was released and devoured the book in two or three days, reading non-stop. But then, as I got older, I found I had less and less time to read—my absorption-rate slowed down, too—and though I kept buying Stephen King's books, and putting them on my shelves, I was less compulsive about reading them. I have since returned to the fold, and just finished "Duma Key." As for "The Stand," I think the first time I read it I was 13 or 14, over a weekend. Then I read it again after college, when I was about 20. It's one of the few books—especially of that length—that I've read multiple times. And I think one of the reasons "The Stand" appeals to me is how big-hearted it is, ultimately. And generous, in terms of storytelling, especially the expanded version. It's just a sprawling, fat, juicy saga that, once you get into it, you don't want it to end. I think I maybe even cried a little bit when I finished it, that first time I read it.

Marvel.com: Why do you think the book is such a favorite of King fans?

Roberto Aguirre-Sacasa: To me, it's all about the characters. The cast is huge, but every single one—even the secondary and tertiary characters we only spend a little time with, like Rita—are completely defined and individualized. The good guys, the bad guys, they're all shaded and complex. Which is obviously, hugely important since the book is a journey, basically, and you must want to go on that journey with them.

"It's just a sprawling, fat, juicy saga that, once you get into it, you don't want it to end."

Marvel.com: How did you land such a plum gig?

Roberto Aguirre-Sacasa: Basically, I auditioned for it. The editor working on *THE STAND*, Ralph Macchio, called me up and asked if I would be interested in writing my version of one of the novel's key scenes—when the hand of God appears in the skies above Las Vegas, if I'm remembering it correctly; this happened in [July of 2007]. And I did, and [it was illustrated], and that sample sequence was sent to the King himself, and I guess he liked what he saw.

Marvel.com: Are there any characters you're particularly looking forward to bringing to funny book life?

Roberto Aguirre-Sacasa: They're literally all great characters—there isn't a single one I'm not excited to write—but I, personally, am most drawn to Fran, Stu, and Harold, to that triangle, because it feels so emotionally real to me. So truthful and painful. Maybe because the first time I read "The Stand," I immediately identified with poor, pathetic Harold, and I always secretly wanted him to get the girl. And Larry Underwood is a great character to write because he's such a hot mess.

"I, personally, am most drawn to Fran, Stu, and Harold, to that triangle, because it feels so emotionally real to me."

Marvel.com: Any favorite scenes you can't wait to show?

Roberto Aguirre-Sacasa: I think [artist] Mike [Perkins] and I probably agree on this one: Larry's escape from New York via the corpse-choked Lincoln Tunnel. In the novel, that sequence is only a few pages long, but the idea of it is terrifying to people in a primal way, I feel, and capturing that will be a lot of fun—and, needless to say, challenging. Probably we're going to expand that section in the adaptation—one of the few ones we will expand—and maybe give it its own issue, since it's so visceral and horrifying. I'm also excited to get to Mother Abigail. She has a great backstory I want to explore and actually show. And Nick and Tom, their journey

across the country, will be interesting to map out. Including their run-in with a tornado, which I have an idea about...

"The apocalypse is only really the first third of the book. And after that, in a weird way, it's about the birth of a new world."

Marvel.com: Can you wax philosophical a bit about the themes of the story?

Roberto Aguirre-Sacasa: All the big themes sandwiched between two covers. Like the Bible, in that way. Good and evil, loss and redemption, despair and hope, the needs of the individual versus the needs of society, personal faith versus organized religion, destiny versus free choice, and on and on.

Marvel.com: We're sort of saturated with post-apocalyptic fiction these days. Is it something in the air? What makes "The Stand" stand out?

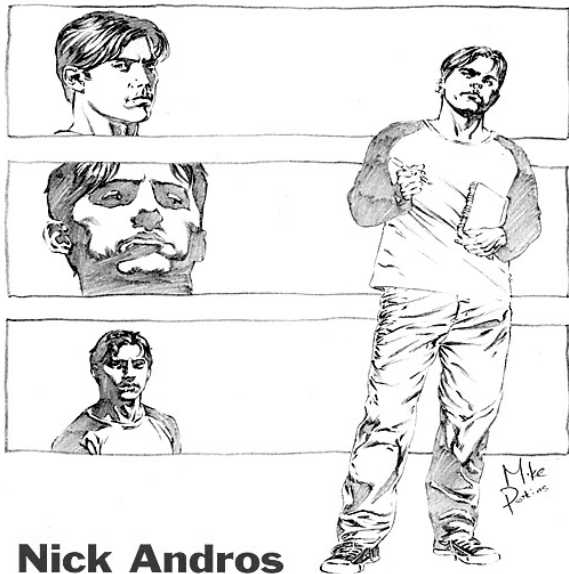
Roberto Aguirre-Sacasa: Two words: Stephen King. Also, remember that the apocalypse is only really the first third of the book. And after that, in a weird way, it's about the birth of a new world. And don't forget that "The Stand" first came out in 1978, I think, and though it certainly wasn't the first vision of a population decimated by a plague or whatever—see [Richard Matheson's] *I Am Legend*, for instance—you can definitely chart everything that's followed it. Like, for instance, the TV series *Lost*. And Cormac McCarthy's *The Road*. And, well, on and on.

Read the original article on Marvel.com

STEPHEN KING
THE STAND



SKETCHBOOK



Nick Andros

AGUIRRE-SACASA ON NICK ANDROS. Only Stephen King would decide that [one of his major characters] should be a twenty-two-year-old drifter who can't speak and can't hear, which — when you think about it — makes a kind of perfect sense: Nick speaks no evil and he hears no evil. It's going to take everything in Nick's doubting soul to rally [himself for] the final stand against Ultimate Evil...

PERKINS ON NICK ANDROS: A truly heroic soul. Nick needs to be young enough to have not yet found himself but old enough in his soul to know his true worth.

Lee Bermejo: "Making of a Cover"



ISSUE #1 COVER SKETCH OPTION BY LEE BERMEJO

From Lee Bermejo: Something wicked this way comes. The first cover image of *The Stand* had to convey that in spades. Since Flagg is the physical embodiment of that concept, it was challenging to try and keep him iconic while still giving him a look, walk, and attitude that would send chills down your spine. I also liked the idea that there would be something simple and normal yet obviously "off" about the image as a whole ... something unsettling.

While drawing this sketch, I couldn't help but keep thinking about what was going to happen in that gas station ... what was in that car. It got to my nerves a little.

Then I started coughing ... true story.

NEXT: Meet Poke and Lloyd, interstate fugitives on their way to nowhere. *Whoop! Whoop!*



"*The Stand*...is a book that has everything. Adventure, romance, prophecy, allegory, satire, fantasy, realism, apocalypse."

-- The New York Times Book Review



The end is nigh as a deadly plague sweeps the nation and widespread panic overcomes the dying masses of America in a terrifying and inexorable tide. Who will be left to rebuild on the ruins of their past lives as the ancient rivalry of Good vs. Evil has only just begun?

Based on the popular apocalyptic novel by celebrated author Stephen King, *The Stand* brings together critically acclaimed writer Roberto Aguirre-Sacasa (*Sensational Spider-Man*, *Angel: Revelations*, HBO's *Big Love*) and the gritty visuals of artist Mike Perkins (*Captain America*) to tell a tale which begins at the end of the world.

PARENTAL ADVISORY
FOR STRONG LANGUAGE & CONTENT



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